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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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# THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT

BY

JOHN MASEFIELD

AUTHOR OF 'THE EVERLASTING MERCY,'  
'THE WIDOW IN THE BYE STREET,'  
'THE TRAGEDY OF NAN,' ETC.

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**TO  
MY WIFE**

## PERSONS

ANTISTIA.

PHILIP.

CORNELIA.

JULIA.

Q. CAECILIUS METELLUS PIUS SCIPIO.

CNEIUS POMPEIUS MAGNUS (called Pompey the Great).

CNEIUS POMPEIUS THEOPHANES.

MARCUS PORCIUS CATO.

A Gaulish Lancer.

LUCIUS DOMITIUS AHENOBARBUS.

COTTA, a Centurion.

MARCUS ACILIUS GLABRIO.

LUCIUS LUCCEIUS.

PUBLIUS LENTULUS SPINTHER.

A Ship-Captain.

A Ship-Boy.

A Mate.

A Boatswain.

ACHILLAS EGYPTIAN.

LUCIUS SEPTIMIUS.

Centurions, Sentries, Soldiers, Trumpeters, Sailors.

	SCENE.	TIME
ACT I.	Rome.	January A.U.C. 705 (B.C. 50).
ACT II.	{ Dyrrachium.	July A.U.C. 706.
	{ Pharsalia.	August A.U.C. 709 (June B.C. 48).
ACT III.	Pelusium.	September A.U.C. 706 (Aug. B.C. 48).

# THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT

## ACT I

*A room in POMPEY'S house near Rome. Walls hung with draperies of a dark blue. Doors curtained. Balcony, open, showing distant lights. A gong and mallet. Wine, glasses, etc. Papers in a casket. Lamps.*

*Horns without as troops pass. ANTISTIA alone, lighting lamps with a taper.*

ANTISTIA [*looking towards the window*]. More soldiers. Blow your horns. Spread your colours, ensign. Your colours'll be dust the sooner. Your breath will be in the wind, a little noise in the night. That's what you come to, soldiers. Dust, and a noise in the trees. Dust, and the window rattling. No more flags and horns then. [*Lighting the last lamp.*] I wish I knew the rights of it. [*Settling books on table.*] I wish Philip would come.

A VOICE [*without, in the balcony*]. Pompey.

ANTISTIA. What was that?

THE VOICE. Pompey.

ANTISTIA [*frightened*]. Who calls Pompey?

THE VOICE. Not so loud. Not so loud, Pompey.

ANTISTIA. What is it? What d'you want with Pompey?

THE VOICE. Philip must tell Pompey at once.

ANTISTIA. What must he tell him?

THE VOICE. To stamp his foot at once.

ANTISTIA. To stamp his foot at once?

THE VOICE [*amid laughter*]. Stamp your foot, Pompey. Aha! Ha! Pompey.

ANTISTIA [*going to the window*]. What's this? Who are you?

THE VOICE [*going*]. Aha! Pompey. Stamp your feet, Pompey.

ANTISTIA [*going to a door R. scared*]. Philip, Philip.

PHILIP [*putting down tray*]. What's the matter? What's happened?

ANTISTIA. There was a voice. A voice. Something at the window. Jeering Pompey.

PHILIP [*opening window*]. Who is there? There's no one there now. Was it a man?

ANTISTIA. There was no one. It had a man's voice. It spoke. It laughed.

PHILIP. It's gone. It's gone, my dear. Don't. Don't. It's gone.

ANTISTIA. They say that the dead come back, to cry in the night [*pause*] whenever bad times are coming. Dead men's souls, licking blood in the night, whenever Rome's in danger.

PHILIP. Hush. Hush. Don't say such things. It gives them life. What was it saying?

THE VOICE. Stamp your foot, Pompey. Stamp your foot, Pompey.

\* ANTISTIA. Ah !

PHILIP [*exorcising at window, with things from tray*]. Wine for blood. [*Pours wine.*] Bread for flesh. [*Breaks bread.*] Salt for life. [*Flings salt.*] A cloak of blue on Rome. A net of gold over this house. To the desert. To the night without stars. To the wastes of the sea. To the two-forked flame. [*Returning heavily.*] God save my dear master, Pompey, I fear there 's trouble coming.

ANTISTIA [*hysterically*]. Ah ! Ah !

PHILIP [*pouring water*]. Drink this. Drink this. I 'll fetch another glass.

ANTISTIA [*hysterically*]. Not off that tray. Not off that tray.

PHILIP. There. There. God save us ! Why, Antistia, they 've no power.

ANTISTIA. I see the marching of armies, that is what the trumpets mean. War. Civil War. Pompey and Cæsar, like eagles struggling.

PHILIP. No. No. Don't say that. You bring things to pass.

ANTISTIA. What else could it mean ? What did it mean ?

PHILIP [*distractedly*]. I don't rightly know what it said.

ANTISTIA. About stamping ? About Pompey stamping ?

PHILIP. Pompey said it in the Senate yesterday. Reports came in. There was a panic. The Senators were at their wits' ends. News came that Cæsar was marching on Rome.

They asked Pompey if he had an army, if he could defend them.

ANTISTIA. Is Cæsar coming ?

PHILIP. It was one of these rumours.

ANTISTIA. What did Pompey say ?

PHILIP. He said if he stamped his foot, soldiers would spring up all over Italy, armies of soldiers, to drive Cæsar back into Gaul.

ANTISTIA. And now he must stamp his foot. Cæsar's on the road with his army.

PHILIP. It's time for the house to shake when the door-posts quarrel. [*Pausing at distant tumult.*]

ANTISTIA. They're proud ones, to set the world on fire so as one of them may warm his hands.

PHILIP. Pompey's only defending the State.

ANTISTIA [*to Cæsar's bust*]. Make the deserts quags of blood, Cæsar. Go on in your pride, till the Kings of the world sweep your stables. You'll come to be a dumb thing, tied in a sheet, carried out foot-foremost. You won't know whether it's tar or spice they'll smear you with, to make you burn. And when you're dust, you'll fill a little pot, Cæsar, a little metal pot on a shelf. Go pray, man. The primrose the rabbit eats will be a prouder thing than Cæsar that day.

PHILIP [*at bust*]. He thinks he's a great one, Cæsar does, now that he's conquered Gaul. What are the Gauls ? The Gauls are naked heathen, with copper swords like the savages. Why, Cæsar would never have been anybody if Pompey hadn't backed him.

•ANTISTIA. That's reason enough for him to fight Pompey now.

PHILIP. Pompey made him what he is. Pompey got him his place in Gaul. He was no one before that. [*Pause.*] And now he hopes to put Pompey down. So he can rule Rome instead. Put my master Pompey down.

ANTISTIA. I suppose Cæsar couldn't beat Pompey, Philip?

PHILIP. Antistia. [*Solemnly.*] Don't you talk like that, Antistia. I believe wherever Pompey goes, there goes a god in front of him. Like fire. It's that makes him what he is. Oh, my dear beloved master. I'm that drove mad, I can't hardly talk of it. That he should have a civil war with Cæsar. And him only newly married.

ANTISTIA. It was a civil war that first made Pompey famous, Philip.

PHILIP. He was with Sulla, against Marius, in the civil wars then. And ever since then he's gone on, just as though a god went before him, brushing a road for him. You would see nothing but dangers all round, and Pompey would ride up. And [*he blows in his hand*] puff. They'd fade. They'd go. [*Pause.*] I've seen all Rome out on the roofs to see my master, Pompey. •Triumph? There were horns blowing, you couldn't hear, and forty kings marching barefoot in the streets. I've seen him grow to be the greatest man in the world.

ANTISTIA. Eh? The greatest man in the world. And all through being with Sulla in the



civil war. Supposing he were not great, Philip. Only a big clay statue. A statue propped up by sticks. A clay thing, gilded. Rats gnawing at it. The wind shaking it. The sun cracking it. [*Pause.*] And dead men, Philip, dead men underneath it in the dust, fumbling at it to bring it down.

PHILIP. Antistia.

ANTISTIA. Time brings all about, they say. You spoke of Sulla, Philip. I was a little girl then, when Marius and Sulla fought. My father was a centurion under Marius. I never told you that. What do you know of me, Philip, except that I'm to marry you? I was in the street outside our house, and some men came across the road. They patted my head and asked if my father was upstairs. I said yes, Philip. And they went in and brought him out. Out to the door in the sun. Some boys gathered to watch. I ran up to him, Philip, to show him my doll. And one of the men said, 'We'll give you Marius.' He was behind my father. He swung his arm right back like this, to give his sword a sweep. He knocked my dada down with a great hack on the neck, and they all stabbed him as he fell. One of the men said, 'There's your dada, little girl; run and tell mother.' And then one of the boys knelt down and stole his sandals, and another snatched my doll away. Time brings all about, Philip. All the lives spilt then by Pompey and Sulla are coming out of the night. Out of Spain. Out of Rome. Out of Asia. Souls have

power, Philip, even in the darkness, when the time comes.

PHILIP [*awed*]. What time ?

ANTISTIA. Pompey's time. There. There. It's beginning. [*Noise of a tumult. The horns of Soldiers.*] They begin like that, Philip. They're very proud. For things that go from the prison of a womb to the prison under the grass, they're very proud. When they march to the trumpet, they forget that women bore them. Women bore them in agony. Not for that, one would think.

PHILIP [*at window*]. Some of Rome seems to be burning. Pray God the Senate's safe. [*Pause.*] We shall have to put off our marriage, Antistia.

ANTISTIA. Why, thus it is. We put off and put off till youth's gone, and strength's gone, and beauty's gone. Till two dry sticks mumble by the fire together, wondering what there was in life, when the sap ran.

PHILIP. I must be with my master, Antistia.

ANTISTIA. Your master. When you kiss the dry old hag, Philip, you'll remember these arms that lay wide on the bed, waiting, empty, for years. You'll remember all this beauty, that would have borne you sons but for your master. [*A noise of a lute off.*] Your mistress too, perhaps. Here she comes. Here comes the young wife, that will have little joy of her man, she with her lute girl, twanging a march for her. Here she comes. Open the door.

PHILIP. Our mistress.

*Enter CORNELIA and JULIA. The Servants place chairs for the ladies.*

CORNELIA. Philip, there must be an escort from the Senate-house. Tell the Captain of the Guard.

*[Exeunt PHILIP and ANTISTIA.]*

JULIA. Tell me. Is Cæsar really going to fight your husband? If he is not going to fight, what does he want?

CORN. He wants to rule Rome as a Dictator. But he plans first to be elected Consul. He is lying in Gaul there, thinking, I think, to frighten every one into electing him. *[Going to the window.]* I wish my father would come in, Julia, I'm anxious. What has the Senate decided? *[She walks up and down.]*

JULIA. The Senate will decide that Cæsar must dismiss his army. What does your father think?

CORN. He thinks that my husband ought to put Cæsar down with a strong hand. Who's that? Come in. *[The door is shaken and opened violently.]*

*Enter her father, METELLUS SCIPIO.*

Father.

MET. Where's your husband? Is he here? Has he been here?

CORN. No, father. What is it?

MET. Still at the House? He must have had my note. Has he sent word to you?

CORN. No. What has happened?

MET. I must talk to you, Cornelia.

JULIA [*rising*]. Good-bye.

MET. No. No, Cornelia. She mustn't go. You'll have to sleep here, my dear girl. The streets aren't safe to-night. Sit down. We're all involved in this. [*Pause.*] Cornelia. What's your husband going to do?

CORN. Father. But I do not know. He tells me nothing.

MET. I've had letters. Cæsar's advancing into Italy, with all his army.

CORN. To fight us? To attack Rome?

MET. Yes. It's what I always feared. But I never thought the man would be such a scoundrel.

CORN. Does my husband know of this?

MET. Yes. I sent word to him at the Senate to meet me here. I had to ride out to the camp. Cornelia. I don't understand your husband. My dear girl, he's been playing with the situation. I don't think you understand even now. It means that the whole of Rome is being handed over to a political brigand. All the governing classes, the religion of our fathers, all that has made Rome great. This cut-throat is marching to destroy it. Something happened at the camp.

CORN. What, father?

MET. The men, the soldiers, Roman soldiers. Men who had eaten the bread and salt . . . They refused duty. They had been bribed to that, by this upstart, Cæsar.

CORN. They will stand and see Rome sacked by this outlaw. But how terrible.

MET. I must see your husband. He's played with us. He must save us.

CORN. There. There. He's coming. There's the sentry.

A VOICE WITHOUT. Attention. Eyes right.

MET. Thank God.

A VOICE WITHOUT. Present arms.

CRIES. Hail! Pompey. Imperator. [*A trumpet blows a flourish.*]

A VOICE WITHOUT. Company. By the right. Quick. March.

PHILIP *enters, opening doors wide, saluting, showing the fasces lining the door. Enter POMPEY. He carries a despatch box. METELLUS salutes.*

[*Exit PHILIP. Doors shut.*]

POMPEY. Ah, Julia. Ah, Cornelia. [*He goes to her, and looks into her eyes.*] Ah, beloved. [*Turning wearily.*] I think that Sertorius was right, Julia.

JULIA. Why?

POMPEY. In our Spanish wars, he planned to steal away to the Fortunate Islands. He could be quiet a little there. [*He goes to table dejectedly.*]

MET. You got my note?

POMPEY. Yes. Yes. [*He sits like one stunned.*].

MET. Man. What are you going to do? Cæsar's marching on Rome with forty thousand men.

CORN. But you can check him. You must.

MET. Do you understand? The whole—  
Does the Senate know?

POMPEY [*opening his despatch box*]. Sit down, dear. [*To CORNELIA.*] Sit down. The Senate knows. There were seven hundred of us in the Senate. Seven hundred of the best men in Rome, sitting there, at sunset, waiting. I had to stand up, among them. I had to tell them that one who—that a man whom I—a man very dear to me—was marching with an army against this Rome, to destroy all that that great house, in generations of honour, has built up here, of virtue, of justice, of freedom, to the wonder of the world.

MET. Yes. Go on. Go on.

CORN. What are they going to do?

POMPEY. Many there were in the pay of—that man.

MET. How did they take it?

POMPEY. They were silent. But a murmur ran through the house. They moved in their chairs. Even those most glad were awed. [*Pause.*] Then Tullus, a man who owes his bread to me—he is in Cæsar's pay now—rose up smiling, to ask me what troops I had for the defence of Rome.

MET. Yes. And you, the guardian of Rome, what troops have you?

POMPEY. I said that with the two legions sent back from Gaul, and with those reserves called up from the country, I might have thirty thousand men.

MET. What is all this talk of you might have?

Those two legions are in Cæsar's pay. They're in mutiny at the camp. They're drawn up there, under the eagles. Their colonels are Cæsar's, body and soul. They refuse to move. As for your reserves, they're with the people. They're all for Cæsar. They came crowding out of their tents crying, Peace! Peace! They won't fight. You've mocked us. You've tricked us. You've betrayed Rome.

POMPEY. So they said in the Senate.

MET. Why did you not prepare for this? You've had months in which to prepare?

POMPEY. I have prepared for it, Metellus. But I did not expect it. I thought that a noble act would be remembered, for more than twenty years. I thought that this Rome would be more to a man than a lust for power. And old friendship, I thought something.

MET. I've no patience with you. [*He sits with twitching hands.*] Well. [*Starting up.*] We know what you haven't done. At least tell us what you have done.

POMPEY. Yes. I'll tell you, Metellus. [*Pause.*] When this began between us, I thought of my own time under Sulla. I'd marched into Africa, to the great sea. I was a young man, then, I did rash things, but I was lucky. I conquered Africa. Sulla sent word to me then to disband my army, and return. [*To JULIA and CORNELIA.*] Forgive my talking of myself like this. [*Pause.*] I thought that my luck was due to genius. I

was very vain, then, Cornelia. There's not much vanity in me at this moment. I resented Sulla's order. My soldiers resented it. They asked me to be their King in Africa. I obeyed Sulla. I thought—if I did—it might be easier—for the next young conqueror—to obey, too. Not to cause civil war.

CORN. He thought—we both thought, father, that Cæsar would remember that. We had planned how all our party, all the Senate even, should go out into the fields to welcome Cæsar, as Sulla welcomed my husband then, if he came home alone, disbanding his army. That would have been a triumph for Cæsar greater than any Consulship. But Cæsar does not see the Rome we see.

POMPEY. I did not think that Cæsar would be blind to the glory of Rome. [*Going to the window.*]

MET. I'll quote to you now something which you said once in Sicily. 'What is all this talk of law,' you said, 'to us that have swords by our sides?' What? You remember those words? Will you sit still, and see Rome sacked? See the rabble make beastly all that seven centuries has made here? See their filthy hands laid—laid on these delicate ladies? See our temples spoiled that their rat-faced brats may grow up to eat free bread, and loaf and spit outside the beer-shops. Pah! What did the Senate say?

POMPEY. They gave me absolute power here.



MET. What? Then send out your press. Bill every able-bodied man. Bill the women if the men won't come.

POMPEY. No, Metellus. Not that.

MET. What then, man? [CORNELIA *interposes. Speaking to her husband.*]

CORN. Cncius, it is better to have war, than to see law set aside. The will of Rome must not be slighted, it must not be set aside for the lust of one man. It is the duty of a Roman, dear heart, to go out under the eagles to defend the Will of Rome, even if he goes alone. And you will not go alone. The souls of our fathers will march with you. And if you die, dear one, defending what they died to make, you will die as I would have my lover die.

POMPEY. Ah! Cornelia. You make death hard. But it would be sweet to die so for you.

MET. [*quickly*]. Go on, girl. Oh, move him, Cornelia. Goad him to action. I cannot. For Rome's sake. Move him. Get him out of this child's mood.

POMPEY. Yes. Yes. Yes. [*Slowly.*] I shall fight Cæsar. [*Sharply.*]

MET. Ah! [*Excitedly.*] But at once. Give him no time to win recruits by success. Give them no time here. The rabble don't hesitate. They don't understand a man who hesitates. Give me all the cavalry. Look. I can worry him with those.

POMPEY. Where's the map? [*He quickly takes map from wall.*] It's the effect here, not the beating of Cæsar. We must stiffen

the towns against him. That 'll check his advance.

MET. Cæsar's quick, mind. He marches light, and he comes a devil of a pace. [*Musingly.*]

POMPEY. You say he's got forty thousand men? Let's see your despatch. Who sent it? [*Taking paper.*] Can you trust this man?

MET. Yes. A clever young fellow.

POMPEY. Young? Where's he served?

MET. He was on Crassus' staff in Parthia. In the smash.

POMPEY. I don't trust ghosts.

MET. Ghosts?

POMPEY. What escapes when an army's destroyed like Crassus'? [*Reading.*] Forty thousand men. Shrewd. This is a shrewd lad, Metellus. He's read a lot of school-books, this man. Come. Forty thousand?

MET. Yes.

POMPEY. No. It's not possible, Metellus. This is politics. Not war. He's forcing our hand. His army's miles away. He's rushing the frontier with a few picked men. The pick of his light foot, and these light Gaulish lancers. It's a bold dash to put all Rome in a panic.

MET. [*biting his nails*]. That's not what you'd have done. •

POMPEY. That's how I know I'm right. [*Standing.*] Take the cavalry. Get into touch with him. Harass him. Delay him. Make time for us. I'll come on with all I can get.

MET. Take the gladiators.

POMPEY. No. This is a Roman question. No paid slaves shall decide Rome's fate.

MET. We shall be a desperate lot without them.

CORN. The Navy. Land men from the ships.

MET. They can't march. This campaign is a race.

POMPEY. No. No. Look. I'll send gallopers to the fleet at Brindisi. I'll tell them to lash north, forced rowing. They'd catch him at Pisaurum. They could cut in on his left flank. So much for the attack. The city here's the problem.

MET. Never mind the city here. The city's for the winner. Always.

POMPEY [*musings*]. Cæsar has an army in occupation here already. Now to secure Rome.

MET. [*quickly*]. The patricians. Let the patricians form a Committee of Public Safety. They'll settle Cæsar's mobs.

CORN. No. No. There'd be massacre all over Rome. All frightened men are merciless.

MET. Be quiet, girl. Yes, man.

POMPEY. No. That's the wild thing the desperate man always does to make his cause more desperate. It would madden the mob against us. Our task is to win the mob.

CORN. Leave Cato in command here.

MET. What?

CORN. Let Cato raise a force purely to defend Rome. Not a party force at all.

POMPEY. Yes, Cato. He stands outside parties. He has power over both.

MET. No, I say. Power? That man, no. He has no power: he's popular.

POMPEY. It's popularity that's wanted.

MET. It's power that's wanted. A few crucified mutineers. Not Cato telling them of good King Numa.

POMPEY [*picking up the hammer of his gong*]. We'll send for Cato.

MET. No. No.

POMPEY. Yes.

MET. Wait a minute.

POMPEY. Well?

MET. We want a soldier here.

POMPEY. We want a man whom everybody can trust.

MET. Cato's not firm enough.

POMPEY. I want Rome calm, not intimidated.

MET. I'm not going to serve if that man's left behind in Rome.

POMPEY. Oh, don't say that. What are your reasons against Cato? In this instance.

MET. How will Cato deal with the mutineers in camp?

POMPEY. Ah! There. [*Pause.*] Yes. We can't be hard on those poor fellows. Try and see it as they see it. They've had the choice of refusing duty or beginning a civil war.

MET. A soldier's first duty is obedience.

POMPEY. Is it? I'd rather have him a man first, myself. Only very good soldiers mutiny. Did you ever notice that?

MET. No. Nor you. They must be made examples of.

POMPEY [*smiling*]. Come. Some wine, Metellus.

MET. [*crossly*]. This isn't a time for wine. [*He stalks up and down the room.*] Suppose we're beaten. I tell you if we're beaten you'll want more than Cato in charge here. You'll want a man to stamp out Cæsar's faction. I'd stop their smiling. By the time Cæsar stormed Rome he'd find few of his friends left. I'd make Rome so sick with blood. By. She'd think no more of Cæsar.

POMPEY. My God! The streets ran blood. In Sulla's time. That once. The carts drove over them.

MET. That was child's play to what this will be.

POMPEY. Yes. Suppose we're beaten. Rome stormed. No, no, never! [*He flings the map aside.*] No. I'll give up Italy rather. I will not fight in Italy. Cæsar's rabble shall have no excuse for sacking Rome.

MET. What? [*A pause.*] Where will you fight him then? In Spain, where your army is?

CORN. Not in Spain.

MET. Why not in Spain?

POMPEY. No. You know the proverb. Spain's a country where a big army starves and a little army gets beaten. I know, I've fought there. And it's far from Rome, and too near Gaul. No, Macedonia. We'll go over with the fleet to Macedonia. There are five good legions from Crassus' smash in Macedonia. We'll prepare an army there.

MET. Yes. But your friends in Rome. Our party here ? The Senate ? The Consuls ?

POMPEY. They must come with us at once to Brindisi, where the fleet lies. We'll take ship there. [*Writing.*] I'm writing to Domitius at Corfinium, to join me instantly with his twenty cohorts. [*Musing.*] I wonder. If he stays, he will be invested. And he will stay, he's as obstinate as a mule. If he marches south at once we shall have twenty thousand. If not, we must leave him to his fate. I must abandon Italy.

MET. [*slowly*]. There's something in it. Yes. I wonder.

POMPEY. It's not so risky. Fighting now is backing losing cards.

MET. We shall lose friends.

POMPEY. We shall gain time.

MET. Let's see the map. [*He takes another map.*] I like it. Yes. It's a good move.

POMPEY. Cæsar will attack my army in Spain, first.

MET. Afraid of its invading his dear Gaul, you mean ?

POMPEY. He'll have no choice in the matter. He's got no ships to follow us. I've got the Navy. While he's building ships, I'll build an Army. If he fights my generals in Spain, it will be a year before he can follow me. We shall have a great army by that time.

MET. Yes. An army, eh ? Macedonian phalanx, eh ? If we send a fiery sign through Macedonia, all the swordsmen of the hills will

come. Out of Dacia, out of Thrace. With Egypt at your back, too.

POMPEY. Yes. Egypt's full of my old soldiers. We can always fall back on King Ptolemy.

MET. [*excitedly*]. Listen. Your idea of Macedonia is splendid! Cæsar won't follow. [*Slapping the table.*] He'll be afraid. Part the world between you. Let Cæsar keep the West. You be King in the East. Build up another Rome in Athens. With you in the East, we could do what Alexander did. We could——

POMPEY. No more ambitions, Metullus. You see where ambition leads. So, Macedonia.

MET. Yes, Macedonia.

CORN. When?

POMPEY. Now, dear.

CORN. To-night?

POMPEY. It doesn't give you much time. It will be hard for you to leave all your pretty things behind.

CORN. I was thinking about your night's rest. Life is book and picture to me. All that is Rome to us comes with us.

MET. Well then, boot and saddle.

POMPEY. Take what men you have, Metellus. And press post-horses. You'll want my orders though. [*He strikes the gong.*]

*Enter* PHILIP.

PHILIP. Sir.

POMPEY. Ask Theophanes to speak to me a moment.  
[*Exit* PHILIP.]

*Enter THEOPHANES, who bows and is saluted.*

POMPEY. Sit down. [*He takes papers from despatch box.*] We're going to Macedonia. We take ship at Brindisi. These orders to our party; have them filled in and sent round.

THEO. Yes. But you won't want them.

POMPEY. You mean that— What do you mean?

THEO. I mean, you won't want them. Cæsar's at Cremona. He's not marching on Rome. He's encamped in his own province. It was a false alarm.

ALL. What?

POMPEY. How do you know that?

THEO. Labienus has just come in. Cæsar's legate. I've been talking to him. Cæsar's sending messengers with new proposals to you. He's not marching on Rome.

MET. So we go on again.

POMPEY. What are the new proposals? Does he know?

THEO. [*shrugging his shoulders*]. His men are beginning to shrink, I believe, now that it comes to the touch. I don't blame them.

CORN. Let us give Cæsar credit for a little nobleness.

MET. Pah! He was in Catiline's conspiracy. It was proved beyond a doubt. Well, Pompey. What are you going to do?

POMPEY. It is very wonderful. I must see Cato. [*Going.*]

MET. Why?

THEO. He's here.



CATO, *in black robes, enters. He stands with arms folded, looking at them all.*

MET. Well, sir ?

POMPEY. Yes, Cato ?

CORN. You 've heard ? Won't you sit down ?

CATO. So this is the family party. Well, Pompey. Now I see the drags that hinder your honesty. [*To JULIA.*] You. The critic. You with neither art nor brain. Thinking you show both by condemning them in others.

JULIA. Do you show art and brain by condemning me ?

CATO. Look into your heart, woman.

CATO [*to METELLUS*]. You, sir. The General. A tailor and a love affair made you a General. Not war. War does not make your kind. But you long for war. You would shriek your country into war, any day, sir, so that humble brave men might make pickings for you, invitations, gold, what you call love affairs, fame. [*To THEOPHANES, while METELLUS looks him up and down.*] I don't know you, sir. [*To POMPEY.*] And you, the mischief-maker, the genius. Well, which of us was right, Pompey ?

POMPEY. You were right. But I have acted more friendly than Cæsar.

CATO. You have made the mischief. Can you unmake it ?

POMPEY. Can you unmake it ?

CATO. I ? I am going into Sicily. You forget. I am Governor there.

CORN. But now. In this moment of truce. Surely it can be remedied ?

CATO. Yes. At a price.

POMPEY. How ?

CATO. You must go alone, on foot, to Cæsar.

POMPEY. Never.

CATO. And tell him that you come to save Rome from civil war ; that a man's pride is a little thing to that, and that so you have put by your greatness.

CORN. Ah ! Ah ! [*She watches POMPEY's face. All turn to POMPEY.*]

POMPEY. No. I have been a King here. I have been like God here. Kings have come to me on their knees. Cæsar. Cæsar's. I made Cæsar by a stroke of my pen. No. Ah, no.

CATO. Cæsar would be shamed to tears, Pompey. Would not that victory content you ?

POMPEY. I cannot. No, I cannot.

CATO. Not to save Rome, Pompey ?

POMPEY. No. I should be a mock. No. No.

CORN. You would be a fire, Pompey, for all time. All the lamps of the world would be kindled at that nobleness.

POMPEY. You wish it, too, dear heart ?

CORN. [*softly*]. I wish it.

POMPEY [*looking round*]. To a young man whom I have made. Oh, Cato, Cato ! Is kindness to a friend only a bitter form of suicide ? [*He fumbles at the clasp of his purple.*] Very well, I will go, Marcus. [*He flings his purple aside.*]

CATO. I thought you were Pompey the Little.  
I wronged you.

MET. [to THEOPHANES.] So. [*They exchange glances.*]

POMPEY. Old man. Old man.

[*A noise without. Cries. A sentry calls 'Halt.' Struggling. Shouts of 'Stand back.' 'Let me in.' The spears rattle. The door is shaken.*]

THEO. [*opening door*]. What's this? [*Pause.*]  
Let him in, Sentry.

*Enter filthy Horseman, dust to the eyes, tottering.*  
*The door is left open, showing Soldiers.*

MET. One of Cæsar's lancers.

THEO. A deserter, eh?

THE MAN [*gasping*]. Which of you is the lord?

POMPEY [*pouring wine for him*]. I am he.  
Drink this. Take your time. What is it?

THE MAN [*spilling his drink like a man half dead of thirst*]. Cæsar! Cæsar! I escaped last night. Cæsar!

CORN. What?

THE MAN. He's crossed the Rubicon. With all his army. Marching on Rome. Be here in two days. [*A pause.*]

POMPEY [*resuming his purple*]. That settles it. There can be no treaty now.

CORN. So war has begun.

POMPEY [*sadly*]. There it is. Only it is more terrible now. More terrible than it was. [*Turning to go.*] It must be war now to the end.

MET. [*picking up the orders from the table and*

*slapping them to command attention*]. And now. To Brindisi. [*He walks briskly towards the door, but halts opposite CATO, at whom he glares. POMPEY and CORNELIA halt to watch him.*] Well, sir. My Conscript Father. Will you crawl before Caesar now, sir? It is long since a Roman bade his King to lick the dust before a traitor. You and your kind may sue to such. Rome puts other thoughts into our hearts.

CATO. There are two Romes, Metellus. One built of brick by hods-men. But the Rome I serve glimmers in the uplifted heart; it is a court for the calm gods, that Rome. Let me not shame that city. Advance the eagles.

A VOICE WITHOUT. Present arms.

[*A trumpet blows a blast.*

*Curtain.*

## ACT II

## SCENE I

*Staff-officer's tent at Durazzo Walls of plain canvas. Canvas door running on rings at back R Smaller canvas door at back L Table and camp-chairs. Everything bare and severe DOMITIUS, LENIUS, THEOPHANES, at the table*

DOMITIUS. So it goes on. And Spain is lost. Look at this position here. Cæsar has shut us in here like so many sheep in a pen. Has Pompey no pride? Or has he grown besotted?

THEOPHANES. Flaccus is raiding Cæsar's lines this morning. He will attack them in three places. And break them.

DOMI. [*fiercely*]. Flaccus is a boy. A whole year wasted, and half the empire lost.

*Enter POMPEY hurriedly. They salute.*

POMPEY. Good morning. I have called you all together to tell you of the loss of my Spanish army, lately commanded by Afranius. We had expected victory, from Afranius' letters. But we are soldiers. We know what Fortune is in war. We are not merchants, to cast him for failing.

DOMI. We have given up Italy, and thrown

away Spain. Africa is invaded and Sicily taken. We have given up and drawn back everywhere. And why? That we might come here to be cooped up by an army half our size. I want to know why. We all want to know why.

POMPEY. I remember Sulla saying that he could make an army love him by talking to the privates occasionally. But that no amount of talking would make his generals love his ideas. Be content. And bide my time.

LENT. Magnus. I am not given to criticism; but this biding time is ruin. We are losing allies; we are losing Rome. Rome looked to you to crush this upstart. Instead of that you have let a rebellion grow into a civil war. You have watched your adherents stamped out piecemeal. You have done nothing.

POMPEY. Wait.

DOMI. We have waited for a year.

POMPEY. I ask you to wait a little longer.

LENT. Magnus, while we wait, the rabble is stamping out aristocracy throughout the world.  
[He rises.]

POMPEY. Sit down, Lentulus. I tell you to wait. The war is in my hands.

DOMI. War is in the hands of the man who strikes. [He thrusts aside the lesser door.] There. Among the crags there. By the pine-clump. In that great red heap like an iron mine. That is Cæsar's camp. I've been out there night after night, worming over rocks and down gullies, keeping my course by the stars, so that,

when a chance came, I could take an army into that camp blindfold. I've a map here. [*Throws down a paper.*] Those red dots are the sentries. Each dot was made at the risk of my heart's blood. I've grovelled in the earth before all those sentries, praying for the moon to go in, while they talked of their love-affairs, I've seen the sergeant coming his rounds with a lantern, and shut my eyes lest they should gleam, and betray me. I could take that camp with two legions in the blackest night of the year. This war is breaking the world in two. And you send Flaccus with a corporal's guard to pull down a hundred yards of paling. Justify that, before you tell me to wait.

POMPEY. Flaccus is fighting the decisive battle of the war

LENT. This is trifling. [*He rises and moves away.*]

DOMI. The decisive. I will tell you what a decisive battle is. I took part in one for you at Massilia three months ago. At the end of that siege, there was no city. There were no people. Only some deathsheds dying of plague, and a few madmen on the walls. And outside, there were towers flinging fires at us, and slings flinging rocks at us, and miles of army coming up to the sack. That was a decisive battle.

POMPEY. Domitius, when a man thinks fixedly of anything, desiring it with his whole nature, he creates a witch in the air, who eats that lust of his till she is a strong pitiless devil.

Domitius, you are given up to a devil. A

devil of lust for battle. But you are fiercer than a devil, for when there is no enemy you fight your friends, and when there are no friends you fight yourself. And when you have torn yourself bloody you fight ideas, not because you understand them, and hate them, but because when you are not fighting you are nothing. I fear you, Domitius. A man's friends are those who understand his ideas, and advance them. You are Cæsar's friend, Domitius.

DOMI. [*intensely*]. You killed my brother, when you were a young man. For that, I swore to tear your heart out. You dined with me once, twenty years ago. You will not remember. I put my hand upon your shoulder. I had a knife in my other hand. I could have stabbed you to the heart. And there you would have died, Magnus, in a mess of roses and spilled wine, before my old Marian friends. But I saw that you were a better man than my brother. Something you said. I saw that you were what Rome wanted. [*Pause.*

[*Fiercely.*] You know better than to call me Cæsar's friend. I've made Cæsar rock in his seat.

POMPEY. You are Cæsar's friend. Your heart beats pulse for pulse with Cæsar's heart. You malign me because my hands are not red from butchery like his. And at this moment, while you malign me, Flaccus is ending the war. Take no more thought of the war. The war is over.

[*The Generals draw to one side and talk apart for a moment.*



POMPEY. Rome is the problem now. You would do well to think of Rome. This is the seventh popular rising since my boyhood. Seven desperate attempts to change in fifty years. Does that teach you nothing?

LENT. Theophanes.

DOMI. Yes.

THEO. Magnus.

POMPEY. I offered Cæsar a broken and distracted Italy. He took it. A turbulent, useless Spain. He took it. I have flung down half a useless world, and he has gorged it and come on into the trap. I am camped in plenty, with six fleets ruling the seas. Cæsar is trenched in mud, living on roots. Besieging me, you call it? He has dug thirty miles of works. He has not enough men to guard ten miles. His men are exhausted and starving. He stays in those works during my pleasure; no longer. He cannot force me to battle. He cannot raid my lines. He cannot go back to Rome.

And I, with one slight thrust, am tumbling him into ruin.

*Enter an Orderly with a despatch. He gives it to POMPEY.*

LENT. From Flaccus?

DOMI. You are of the Fifth?

ORDERLY. From Titus Pulcio, my lord.

POMPEY. Very well.

ORDERLY. Have you any orders, my lord?

POMPEY. No orders. Acknowledge.

*[Exit Orderly, saluting.]*

THEO. Is it important ?

POMPEY. Read it.

THEO. [*reading*]. From Titus Pulcio, legate, fifth legion, to Headquarters: 'The attack under Valerius Flaccus has been repulsed with heavy loss. The survivors have fallen back upon the old works, south of the river, where desperate fighting is now going on. I am marching with what I have. The enemy is in force. Stragglers report position hopeless.'

DOMI. These thrusting youths want a lesson. Now, Magnus. Justify your plan, now.

POMPEY. Wait.

LENT. Wait ? While our right flank is being rolled up ?

POMPEY. It would take Cæsar two days to bring up enough troops to crush our right.

DOMI. Surely you will smash this attacking force.

POMPEY. It will exhaust itself. Cæsar can neither reinforce it, nor replace it. I am fighting with the thought of Rome before me. I will not march back to Rome over corpses, in the Sulla fashion.

DOMI. At least you will march back over those whom we took last night. I killed those.

POMPEY. You killed those men ?

DOMI. They were rebels, I tell you. Traitors.

POMPEY. I will judge traitors.

DOMI. They were my own deserters. Dogs. I will serve all traitors so. And I tell you this.

POMPEY. Not a word. You disgrace our cause, Domitius. [*Pause, and change of voice.*]

I may win this war, or this [*showing his gold eagle-clasp*] may pay a camp-trull yonder. But whether I win or go down, those on my side shall act like knights of the bodyguard of God. See to it.

*Enter Chief Centurion COTTA, battered.*

COTTA. I report the death of commander Flaccus, my lord.

POMPEY. Killed ?

COTTA. Yes, my lord.

DOMI. That is what happens in skirmishing. Nothing is done, and the good man gets killed.

COTTA. We were beaten back, my lord ; the surprise failed.

POMPEY. Yes ? Well ?

COTTA. We rushed their wall, tore up their palisades, and set fire to two of the turrets. Then they surrounded us. I should think they had two legions on to us. We had to cut our way home.

POMPEY. And your commander ?

COTTA. He was killed in the thick, my lord. After our storm, we were driven back on to the palisades. The pales were all on fire, all along the line, burning hard. I looked one minute and saw him backed right up against the flames, with a dozen Thracians. They had a whole troop of lancers stabbing at them. I got within a few paces of him, trying to bring him off, but the fireballs burst so thick one couldn't see. My men were being cut to pieces, the cavalry

was cutting in on our rear, and there came a rush of spearmen which swept me off the rampart. I saw his body falling back into the fire, all lit up. But we could never get near the place again. They cut us to pieces down on the flat. They killed eight hundred of us.

LENT. A severe repulse.

DOMI. Wasted. Wasted lives. Utterly useless, wicked waste.

POMPEY. And then ? What happened then ?

COTTA. They drove us back into the old works by the river ; over the outer wall into the ditch. [*Pause.*] We were penned up in the ditch like beasts in a slaughter-house. They swarmed up above us on the wall, pelting us. We were below them, grinding in the mud, huddled like sheep. Men will always huddle when they have no room to use their shields. It was so fierce, that I thought our men would break. But we could not break. We were shut in. We were so pushed together that the dead could not fall. And being pressed man to man gave us a kind of courage. I got up on a heap where the wall had fallen. I wanted to see. I could see all a wave of red plumes where Cæsar's Gauls were pressing up, calling to their horses. Arr. Arr. There was a roar everywhere like ice breaking up in the spring. Behind their main attack they were making a way through the wall for their horse. Every now and then their picks flashed and the earth came scattering down. It was worst at the gate. The noise of the axes on the gate was like a ship-yard. They brought up a tree to

batter it, and every time they ran at it, you could see the wood give, in great splinters.

There was a little grey centurion by the gate. I could not see his legion, for his helmet had been smashed by a stone ; but I think he was of the fifth. He had a green scarf over his shoulder. He was down under the gate shoring it up with baulks. About a dozen naked Gauls swarmed up on to the wall above him, singing their pæan. They hurled down darts right on to him. The darts struck the earth all round him, till the pebbles were flying in his face. He had no shield. Only a camp-follower, who held the wood while he lammed it in with a maul. And every time the batterers ran in, those two stopped work, and cheered, and flung the darts back, and then drove in another pile. I thought we were lost, but it was our fight, my lord.

For I heard fifes, playing 'The Day of Zama,' and men singing. It was a cohort of the fifth, marching to support our left flank. They came on slowly, in line, with their heads up, and the fifes playing. The centurions led them, singing, marching well ahead. It was a fine thing to see those men coming on. Their ranks were so locked that the oak-trees on their shields made a green breastwork across their front. It was our fight after that. We caught them in the outer ditch. The ditch is choked with them. Cæsar lost a full thousand there in the ditch. They were broken. We shook them to the heart. They will not face us again, my lord, for a long

time. Nor any enemy. Cæsar will have trouble with them.

POMPEY. Very well, Cotta.

COTTA. They are sending in the body with a trumpet, my lord.

POMPEY. Yes! Send me the returns of killed and wounded and the centurions' reports. Your legion will stand no watch to-night. See that your men rest. Order wine from the sutlers for them. I will speak to them to-night.

COTTA. Thank you, my lord.

*[He goes out, saluting.]*

DOMI. One moment Cotta

*[He goes out, after him.]*

THEO. Cæsar is sending a trumpet. Can he be suing for peace?

LENT. Why should he sue for peace after a skirmish?

POMPEY. It was the pricking of a bubble. He is suing for peace. And if I grant peace, I shall have these to fight. And if I refuse peace, this ruin will go on.

THEO. Do we receive this trumpet?

*Enter DOMITIUS.*

DOMI. Magnus. Cæsar is in disorder. His men are leaving the trenches. He is withdrawing. His south walls are abandoned already.

POMPEY. Yes. He has learned his lesson.

He must pay them now for the life they have spent for him. He cannot pay them. The most that he can do is to save them from the result of his insanity.

THEO. He can retreat.

POMPEY. How can he retreat? He cannot retreat. Where can he go? My navies hold the sea. To the north there are savage tribes. The south is blocked by my garrisons. I am here in the west with my army. And to the east lies Metellus, with another army.

He has one chance of saving them. He can sue for peace.

DOMI. You are not going to receive this herald?

POMPEY. Yes. Rome must have peace.

If Cæsar will make submission——

DOMI. { A surrender will be useless.

THEO. { Cæsar must be destroyed.

LENT. { How will you settle Rome, with Cæsar  
                  alive?

POMPEY. This war has gone on all my life. Sulla's method failed. Catiline's method failed. They shall not be tried again. Rome shall be settled this time finally.

DOMI. If you hesitate to strike now, you are a traitor, Magnus.

POMPEY. I have made my plan.

[*Sternly.*] I will abide by it. To your place. Murmur no more.

No little gust of passion shall set me wavering.

[*A Voice without and a trumpet.*]

VOICE. Present arms. Port arms. Pass friend. Present arms.

POMPEY. Life is nothing. It is the way of life which is so much. Enter there.

COTTA [*entering*]. The body, my lord. With the trumpet.

*Enter Bearers with the body of VALERIUS FLAC-  
CUS. COTTA, and the others salute the  
corpse. Then, with a solemnity of trumpets  
blowing points of ceremony, MARCUS ACILIUS  
enters, led by two Centurions. He is  
blindfolded. COTTA, the Bearers and the  
Centurions go out, when the handkerchief is  
removed.*

ACILIUS. I bring back your soldier, Cneius  
Pompey.

POMPEY. You bring a message ?

ACIL. I come from Cæsar.

POMPEY. Well ?

ACIL. He asks you to end this war. The gods  
have given you an equal measure of victory.  
You have both lost and won half the Roman  
world. Now that the world is shared between  
you, you can consent to a peace. To-morrow, if  
fortune favour one of you, the fortunate one will  
think himself too great to parley. [*Pause.*]  
Cæsar asks that a peace may be concluded. If  
you will undertake to do the same, he will make  
public oath to disband his army within three  
days. That is his proposal.

POMPEY. More than a year ago, the Senate  
ordered Cæsar to disband his troops. That  
decree still stands disregarded. I cannot treat  
with a rebel. Cæsar must obey that decree and  
submit to the Senate's mercy.

ACIL. The quarrel is between you and Cæsar,  
Magnus.

POMPEY. Not at all. I represent the Senate.



ACIL. Your party of the Senate, which my party does not recognise.

POMPEY. These are the facts, Acilius. Cæsar has attacked Republican rule. He has failed. I make it a condition of treaty that he acknowledge Republican authority.

ACIL. Cæsar has never denied that authority. He is in arms against a perversion of that authority by unscrupulous men. That he seeks to end the Republic is denied by my presence here, asking for peace. Cæsar is no suitor to you. That great mind is its own sufficient authority. Farewell, Magnus [Going.]

[At door.] You will grant peace if Cæsar kneels in the dust. Very well. Rome is more to him than honour. He will kneel in the dust, in the most public place in Rome. He will submit himself, body and cause, to the judgment of the Roman people there assembled.

Will that suffice ?

POMPEY. No

The mob has no voice in this matter. The mob must be taught to obey its rulers. Cæsar must submit to the Senate

ACIL. Then the blood will be on your hands, Magnus [Going.]

POMPEY. It will suffice if Cæsar surrender to myself in the presence of both armies. But a public act of submission must be made. Otherwise it will be thought that Cæsar drove us from Italy, and forced us to accept his terms. That I cannot allow.

ACIL. I am to tell Cæsar that you refuse.

[*Quietly.*] From fear of what the world may think?

POMPEY. You count that a little thing, the thought of the world? For what else are we fighting; but to control the thought of the world? What else matters, Acilius?

You think that I am fighting to be a master? Not so. I am fighting because I know what Cæsar wants. I have watched his career step by step. Cæsar means to be king. He has bribed the rabble to crown him.

You see only the brilliant man, winning—what he has the power to win. I look beyond that man. I see Rome under a secret, bloody domination and a prey to future Cæsars. That shall not be.

I am an old man, now, Acilius. I have been fighting this battle all my life. I hope now to end it. You have heard my terms.

[*He strikes a gong*

*A pause. Enter a Centurion.*

Do you accept them or refuse them? Take your time.

*Pause.*

ACIL. I refuse them.

POMPEY [*to Centurion*]. You will take the Gemella legion, drive in Cæsar's outposts and burn the works. [*Exit Centurion*]

ACIL. There is no voice for peace, then. I have failed. Now that my task is done, may I speak with you privately?

POMPEY. Yes. On a private matter. Is your business private?

ACIL. Yes. It is private.

POMPEY [*to Generals*]. Leave us.

[*Exit Generals.*]

[*To ACILIUS.*] Be brief.

ACIL. My mother married you, years ago.

She was dragged by force from my father so that you might be propped by a vote the more. She died of a broken heart, in your bed.

You have taken worse props, now. These nobles. They are using you to stamp out democracy, so that they may plunder in peace for another fifty years.

And when you have done their task: when the war is over—

POMPEY [*taking up gong*]. I cannot listen to this.

ACIL. —you plan to make just those reforms for which Cæsar is fighting. You mean to cripple the aristocracy. And they will stop you. Domitius hates you. Metellus fears you. Lentulus is jealous of you. They are planning to get rid of you, even now. [*Pause.*]

Get rid of them, Magnus. Take Cæsar as your friend. End the war. Drive them out.

POMPEY. And after?

ACIL. You could make Rome what you please.  
[POMPEY *strikes the gong.*]

*Re-enter Generals.*

POMPEY. And after? [*Pause.*] Your party shall submit to mine. [*He writes a few words.*] You may take this to Cæsar. [*Gives writing.*]

Give this man safe conduct.

ACIL. I am going, Magnus. I shall not see you again. [THEOPHANES goes out.

POMPEY [*who has turned away*]. Well ?

ACIL. Pride is a mean thing in the presence of death. To-day you are great, and the kings bring tribute to you. To-morrow you may be this, only this, praised by the worm.

[*Showing corpse.*

POMPEY. You talk of the presence of death. Man, I am in the presence of life, and death's a pleasure to it.

COTTA and Centurions enter with THEOPHANES.  
*They salute.*

Who cares what I may be ? I may be carrion. But while I am man, and carry a faith in me, I will guard that faith. See this man through the lines.

[*With a solemn blowing of a point of ceremony, COTTA and the Centurions go out, leading ACILIUS, blindfolded. Murmurs. Acclamations*

[*The Generals eye POMPEY. He walks to the body and looks at it.*

POMPEY. Poor boy. You have gone a long way from this inn.

When you were born, women kissed you, and watched you as you slept, and prayed for you, as women do. When you learned to speak, they praised you ; they laughed and were so tender with you, even when they were in pain. And to-night you will wander alone, where no woman's

love can come to you, and no voice speak to you, and no grief of ours touch you to an answer.

The dead must be very lonely.

DOMI. [*coming forward and looking at the body*].  
That? Why be sad at that?

He was marked for it. [*Quietly.*] Magnus. I have something to say. I give you full credit for what you have done. You were right. But not so right as I would have been. Destruction's what war's for. Still. It has happened. Now there is Rome. How are you going back to Rome without the moral support of a victory?

LENT In Rome, it is said openly that you have been shuffled about at Cæsar's will.

THEO And that we have been beaten in every battle

POMPEY. What is that noise, there?

[*Cries of 'Victory' Clapping. Trumpets. A cry of 'Present Arms' The spears rattle.*

*Enter LUCIUS LUCCEIUS, in the civil dress.*

LENT Luccius

THEO. Lucius Luccius.

[*LUCCEIUS stands looking at them silently. He salutes the body, and advances slowly.*

LUCCEIUS [*slowly*]. I salute you, Cneius Pompey. I come from Rome

POMPEY What news do you bring from Rome?

LUCCEIUS News of your triumph. Magnus.

Cæsar's army, under Curio, invaded Africa.

Curio is killed. His army is destroyed. Africa is saved to us. [*He takes a laurel wreath.*

The Roman people send me with this wreath, Magnus. [*He offers it, with reverent dignity.*

POMPEY [*taking the wreath and laying it on FLACCUS' head*]. Once, long ago, I played with you. By the fish-pools at Capua, watching the gold-fish.

You asked me for my purple, that glittering day long ago. [*He lays his purple over FLACCUS.*] All things for which men ask are granted. A word may be a star or a spear for all time. This is the day of my triumph, it seems.

[*A distant trumpet winds. It winds again.*]

THEO. There is a horn blowing.

POMPEY. It is blowing like a death-horn.

DOMI. It is a Roman call.

In Cæsar's camp.

[*DOMITIUS flings aside the canvas.*]

It is the 'Prepare to March.' He is in retreat. His huts are burning. They are winding out upon the road there. They are floundering up the pass. Two thousand horse could ruin them.

POMPEY. Ruin is not my province. Let them destroy themselves. They are wandering out into the wilds without heart, without hope, without plan. That is the forlornest march ever called by trumpets. There is death in every heart there already. Well. We shall follow.

Call the chief centurions.

[*THEOPHANES goes to the door, to the Sentry without.*]

We win.

[*Going to the body.*] And to-night we shall be marching from this poor earth, pursuing Cæsar, marching to many trumpets, under the stars, singing as we march. I shall end Sulla's war,

now. But we will kill the rebellion, remember, not those Romans.

*The Chief Centurions enter.*

A trumpeter there. Strike camp. Prepare to march. [*A Centurion going out, calls.*

Take up the body.

1ST CENTURION.

Man is a sacred city, built of marvellous earth.

2ND CENTURION.

Life was lived nobly here to give this body birth.

3RD CENTURION.

Something was in this brain and in this eager hand.

4TH CENTURION.

Death is so dumb and blind, Death cannot understand. [*They lift the bier.*

Death drifts the brain with dust and soils the young limbs' glory.

Death makes women a dream and men a traveller's story,

Death drives the lovely soul to wander under the sky,

Death opens unknown doors. It is most grand to die

[*They go out, followed by POMPEY. LENTULUS, DOMITIUS, THEOPHANES and LUCCEIUS remain.*

[*Now without comes a shaking blast from a trumpet. It is taken up and echoed by many trumpets, near and far, blowing the legionary calls, till the air rings.*

*Curtain.*

SCENE II

*The same. Taper light Dawn later. POMPEY writing*  
*Enter LUCCEIUS*

LUCC. Not sleeping, Magnus ?

POMPEY. I have had evil dreams.

Are you from Rounds ?

Is all quiet ?

LUCC. Yes.

There is a light near Cæsar's camp. They are burning their dead.

Our scouts took two lancers. They say that Cæsar's men are dying. Of fever and hunger.

POMPEY. Yes. He must surrender within a few days. And so they are burning their dead ?

LUCC. Yes.

POMPEY. Now we have Rome to settle.

[*P'ause.*

I lie awake, thinking.

What are we, Luccius ?

LUCC. Who knows ? Dust with a tragic purpose. Then an end.

POMPEY. No. But what moves us ?

I saw a madman in Egypt. He was eyeless with staring at the sun. He said that ideas come out of the East, like locusts. They settle on the nations and give them life ; and then pass on, dying, to the wilds, to end in some scratch on a bone, by a cave-man's fire

I have been thinking that he was wise, perhaps. Some new swarm of ideas has been settling on Rome. A new kind of life is being born. A.



new spirit. I thought a year ago that it was crying out for the return of kings, and personal rule. I see now that it is only crying out for a tyrant to sweep the old life away.

Rome has changed, Luccæus. Outwardly, she is the same, still. A city which gives prizes to a few great people. A booth where the rabble can sell their souls for bread, and their bodies for the chance of plunder. Inwardly, she is a great democratic power struggling with obsolete laws.

The crowd must have more power.

LUCC [surprised] That would be a denial of your whole life, Magnus.

You have been crushing democracy for forty years.

POMPEY I have crushed rebellions. I mean now to crush their cause.

There must be a change. A great change.

*Enter METELLUS, DOMITIUS, LENTULUS.*

LUCC. [giving paper] This is my report. [*He salutes and goes. At the door he pauses, looking out.*] The pyre is still burning. They must be dying like flies. [Exit.]

METELLUS [*as the Generals sit facing POMPEY*]. Cæsar has sent to me privately, Magnus, to beg me to ask terms from you. I sent back his letter without comment.

The war is over; but we are not yet secure. We shall have to garrison the provinces for some years with men whom we can trust.

Spain and Gaul are arranged for among

ourselves. It is the lesser appointments. Magnus, I want your voice, on behalf of Lucius Tuditanus. I was thinking of sending him as my deputy into Asia.

POMPEY. Is that the soldier Tuditanus, who did so well under you? [To DOMITIUS.

DOMI. No. His nephew.

MET. He's a young man on my personal staff.

POMPEY. Has he qualified for the prætorship?

MET. No. Not in the strict legal sense. But he was of the greatest use to me in Asia. He would be competent.

POMPEY. In what way was he of use to you?

MET. In the collection of tribute, when they disputed our assessments. They hoped to wrangle in Court, without paying, till Cæsar saved them. Tuditanus stopped that. He judged the claims on the spot, and the tax was paid, or distrained, there and then. Often the patrols did not have to unsaddle. And as we needed the money quickly, the system was of great use to me.

POMPEY. Yes. But the law is plain, Metellus. A prætor and a prætor's deputy represent Rome. It is a responsible office. They judge and govern in Rome's name. Men must be trained for it. What has Tuditanus done, besides this tax collection, that the laws should be broken for him?

LENT. His father has made many sacrifices for us.

POMPEY. There is a growing belief in Rome

that a sacrifice should be a good investment. Anything else ?

MET. He is one of those brilliant young men, of proved loyalty, for whom we ought to provide. I recommend him to you.

POMPEY. That is much in his favour. But I want proof that he can govern. Tell me, Metellus. Where has he shown administrative talent ?

MET. He has not shown it. He is a man, whom we ought to bind to us. He would soon learn. We could give him a staff of old soldiers, to steady him, at first.

POMPEY. Has he any power of command ? Where has he served ?

DOMI. He was in the horse for a time, in Lycia.

POMPEY [*to METELLUS*]. What recommended him to you ?

MET. Never mind the merit. I am contending for the principle, that our friends must be rewarded.

POMPEY. Yes. But prætorian power. No. He must qualify.

LENT. Before you reject him, will you not see him ? Metellus and Domitius would not recommend him without grave reason. I might say, without urgent reason.

POMPEY. I want an imperative reason. Without that, it would be a gross act of favouritism. And illegal. As for the results, we have seen such prætors. We should have a rising, and possibly a frontier war. No. Tuditanus cannot be prætor.

MET. Remember, Magnus. Tuditanus is one of many. Others are in the same position. With a right to expect employment.

POMPEY. Peace will try their quality.

There are men with Cæsar with a right to expect employment.

*[The Generals look at each other and sigh.]*

DOMI. There is another point. We are going back to Rome. Rome is in a rebellious, unsettled state. We must secure ourselves.

I ask that every man of any standing in Rome be brought to trial, even if he have remained neutral. If the rebels have attacked authority, the neutrals have ignored it. And both must suffer. Rebellion must be stamped out.

*[Gives paper.]*

The four hundred men in this list have actively helped the rebellion. There can be no question of trial for them. I ask that they be put to death.

POMPEY. That is out of the question. War will end when Cæsar surrenders. I cannot allow reprisals. I want Rome settled.

LENT. Perhaps you will explain how you plan to administer Rome . . . when we return.

MET. *[softly]* There will be an amnesty for offences committed?

POMPEY. Yes.

DOMI. You will pardon these rebels?

POMPEY. If they submit.

LENT. *[slowly]*. Will you allow them to help in the reconstruction?

POMPEY [*hotly*]. Yes. Power is in too few hands. There must be a change in Rome. I would have these four hundred firebrands made Senators, to help us make the change wisely.

MET. So.

DOMI. Magnus. There is only one way of settling Rome. By showing her who is master in a way which she 'll remember.

LENT. Any dallying with these rebels will leave us where we were before. Hated, and flouted by the rabble, and in danger from it. Losing our privileges, one by one. Losing our possessions and our power. Magnus, I would ask you to weigh this proposal very carefully. It affects the future of the patrician idea.

POMPEY. And of Rome. What kind of future do you expect from a massacre like this? I will tell you what you will get. You will drive these four hundred firebrands into the Provinces, where it will take five years of war to crush them.

No. I'll go back with peace. Not a man shall be touched.

LENT. Before we go back with peace, we must end the war. I have had letters from Rome

Popular voice in Rome says that we have feared to risk a battle. That the war drags on, when it could be ended in a day.

That we dare not kill these representatives of the people.

That is a dangerous spirit in a city which we are about to rule. That spirit can only be

broken by decisive success. We must go back with victory. A battle is certain victory to ourselves. We ask you to give battle.

**MET.** We have asked this before, without success. We ask it now, feeling it to be a grave need. Lentulus has mentioned it as a political expedient. I add to that this, that our treasury is nearly empty. We have no means of raising more money. We have drained Spain and Asia for years to come. And your inactive plan of campaign has killed our credit. We must fight. We cannot afford to keep the field for another month.

**POMPEY.** Cæsar cannot keep the field for another week.

**DOMI.** Cæsar will drag on, day by day, till the corn is ripe. It is not many days now to harvest. You let his men get a full provision and you will see how long they will keep the field. I could break that impostor's strength with the horse alone.

**POMPEY.** I can break his strength without risking a life. I will not give battle. Be thankful that we can end such a war with so little bloodshed. [*The Generals rise.*]

**DOMI.** You are the oldest, Lentulus.

**LENT.** It may lose us votes, remember. You are the most popular

**MET.** Perhaps I should do it. I am related.

**POMPEY.** What do you wish to say ?

**MET.** Magnus. I have to speak to you.

You love power too well.

Your command ends with the war.

You have tried to prolong your command by neglecting to end the war.

But the war is over.

You plan now to retain command while you impose your will upon the State. That is a menace to the Republic. We have been forced to convoke the Senate to discuss it.

The Senate has sanctioned the appointment of Tuditanus, and the list of the proscribed. It also commands that you give battle to Cæsar.

*[He gives a paper.]*

*[POMPEY walks up stage slowly, then down.]*

*He stands at table, fronting them.*

POMPEY. What do you expect me to say, Conscript Fathers? That I refuse to obey this order?

I could refuse.

If I were Cæsar, or Lentulus, or you, Domitius, or Metellus, I should refuse.

And my soldiers, or Cæsar's there, would work my will on a Senate which had so insulted me.

But I am Pompey the Great. I am bound by my military oath.

Do not think to humble me. Death is a little thing to the loss of conscience.

Death is easier than life to me.

But even if I die, Rome will be a prey to unscrupulous men.

There is no hope for Rome. She ends here. Disaster begins.

But for me, you would now be beggars at Cæsar's doors. I saved Rome from Cæsar.

11] POMPEY THE GREAT 61

And now Rome is to beg her life from you.  
You have used Pompey the Great to ruin her.

But you have first to fight for her.

You shall give your sin a dignity, by risking your lives for it. *[He strikes the gong.]*

*Enter an Aide.*

*[To Aide.]* Give the signal for battle.

*[Exit Aide.]*

You have your will, now.

This is the end.

And at the end, think what it is which you destroy.

Rome is nothing to you. Only the reward of greed, and hate, and pride.

The city where justice was born.

Look beyond your passions, at what Rome is. It is the state of Rome, not passion, which concerns us now.

A little while ago she was a market-town, governed by farmers. Now she rules Europe.

And in herself no change. Cramped still. Fettered. The same laws. The same rulers. Like iron on her heart

And forty years of civil war. All my life. A blind, turbulent heaving towards freedom.

*[Without, a confused noise as of many men stirring from sleep. Shouted orders are clearly heard above the murmur.]*

THE ORDERS. Fall in. Dress. Cohort. By



the right. Cohort, to the left, wheel. Eyes left. Cohort. Fifers, three paces to the—  
Attention, etc., etc. Cohort. Salute, etc.

*[In a moment's silence a trumpet blows outside the tent. Cheering.]*

POMPEY. Five minutes ago I had Rome's future in my hand. She was wax to my seal. I was going to free her

Now is the time to free her. You can tear the scales and the chains from her. You can make her a State so splendid that Athens would be a dust-heap to her.

You will not.

You will drive her back three centuries, so that you may wreak your passions on her.

Go on, then Destroy her Or be destroyed.

Whether you win or lose, Rome ends.

*[A pause. Orders without.]*

ORDERS The cohorts will advance in—  
Cohort, halt. Ground arms Attention. Form four deep. Attention By the right. Quick march. Cohort. Cohort. To the left. Turn.

DOMI What orders have you?

*[For the next minute or two a noise of troops moving.]*

POMPEY. You have fought this battle many times in your hearts. *[He flings the doors wide, showing a bright dawn]* Now you will fight it in earnest You will fight the wild beasts whom I could have starved like beasts.

Go to your divisions.

*[The Generals go out silently. POMPEY stands by the table.]*

ORDERS. Cohort. Halt. Ground arms. Attention. Form four deep. Cohort. Left turn.

*Enter PHILIP. POMPEY does not look at him.*

*Fifes of a cohort pass.*

PHILIP. Do you want me, my lord ?

POMPEY [*turning*]. Can you sing, Philip ?

PHILIP. Sing, my lord ?

POMPEY. Yes.

PHILIP. I don't know, my lord.

POMPEY. What was that song we had ? That night in the Asian wars, when we broke Mithridates ?

PHILIP. Me to sing it, my lord ?

POMPEY. About something coming to an end.

PHILIP [*hesitating*]. I don't know whether I can, my lord.

POMPEY. Sing.

PHILIP. I'll try, my lord. [*He repeats.*

Though we are ringed with spears, though the last hope is gone,

Romans stand firm, the Roman dead look on.

Before our sparks of life blow back to him who gave,

Burn clear, brave hearts, and light our pathway to the grave.

POMPEY. Take my purple, Philip.

*[He flings his purple aside.]*

A CENTURION. Eyes left. Salute.

A COHORT PASSING. Hail ! Pompey. Imperator.

*[Trumpets.]*

*Curtain.*

## ACT III

*The Poop of a Lesbian Merchantman of the First Century B.C.*  
*On each side, the bulwark of a ship, painted green. There*  
*are gaps, or gangways, in these bulwarks, so that people*  
*may go down the ship's side into bouts*

*At back of stage, the poop-rail, also painted green. A*  
*wooden belfry with a bell stands upon the middle of the*  
*poop-rail*

*On each side of the bell is a ladder leading down to the main*  
*deck. Gaps in the poop-rail allow people to reach the*  
*poop by these ladders*

*Above the deck, sloping from amidships like a tent, is an*  
*awning of blue and white baskas. This awning has a flap,*  
*which falls at back of stage, hiding the poop from the*  
*main deck. On both sides of the stage the awning is*  
*secured by stops to guys above the ship's bulwarks*

*In the centre of the stage (if the theatre stage is so built) is*  
*a hatchway, surrounded by a raised white rim or coaming.*  
*This leads down to the cabins*

*Behind it is a mast (painted 'mast colour') which rises up*  
*through the awning*

*Round the mast is a square of timbers, like a stout fence.*  
*These are the bitts, to which the running rigging is be-*  
*layed*

*Stout ropes and blocks lead along the mast*

*Attendants, Sailors, etc., etc., keep always to the starboard*  
*side out of respect to POMPEY, who uses the weather, or*  
*honourable side*

*At the rising of the curtain Captain is standing by poop-*  
*rail, looking at the men at work forward. The Boy holds*  
*up the awning so that he can see under it*

THE CHANTYMAN [heard off, amid a click of  
 paws]. Old Pompey lost Pharsalia fight.

THE SAILORS. [*Heaving at the forward capstan.*]  
Mark well what I do say.

THE CHANTY.

Old Pompey lost Pharsalia fight.

THE SAILORS.

And Cæsar now is the world's delight.

And I'll go no more a-roving,

With Pompey the Great.

A-roving A-roving.

Since roving's been my ru-i-n,

I'll go no more a-roving

With Pompey the Great.

THE MATE [*from far forward*] Avast heaving.  
Walk back. [*Pause.*] Unship your bars

THE CAPTAIN. That'll do, boy. [*Boy drops awning*] Now we're riding to a single anchor.

THE BOY. Yes, sir.

THE CAPT. [*kindly*]. D' you know what little port that is yonder?

THE BOY. No, sir.

THE CAPT. That's Pelusium, in Egypt. This is the Nile.

THE BOY. Is this where the King of Egypt lives, sir?

THE CAPT. [*pointing*] Over yonder. Where all those soldiers are. That's where the King of Egypt is. Young King Ptolemy, whom Pompey sent the letter to, after Cæsar beat him.

THE BOY. Why does Pompey come to him, sir? He's only a boy.

THE CAPT. It was through Pompey he became king. And there are lots of Pompey's old soldiers yonder. An army of them

THE BOY. What a lot of ships, sir.

THE CAPT. [*anxiously*]. Ye-es. A lot of ships.

THE BOY. They must be men of war, sir. There's a bugle. Oh, look, sir, at those big galleys. Haik at the bugles. [*Bugle-calls off.*] Is that to call the slaves, sir?

THE CAPT. [*looking under the sharp of his hand*]. Is that a boat putting off from the flagship? That big galley nearest to us?

THE BOY. Yes, sir. Don't they pull well, sir? They're coming to us.

THE CAPT. Quick. Get the red side-ropes rove.  
[*The Boy retrieves side-ropes, which he takes from locker by the gangway*]

THE BOY [*at his work*]. They're hailing us, sir.

A CRY. Ship ahoy! Ahoy, you!

THE CAPT. Hulloh!

A CRY. What ship is that?

THE CAPT. The *Fortune*. From Cyprus.

A CRY. Have you Lord Pompey aboard you?

THE CAPT. Yes. Lord Pompey's aboard us.  
Down below. [*Pause.*]

THE BOY. They seem to be talking together, sir.

A CRY. When did you leave Cyprus?

THE CAPT. [*humbly*]. At noon, sir, yesterday.  
[*A pause.*]

A CRY. D'ye hear there? You're not to send any boat ashore.

THE CAPT. Ay, ay, my lord.

THE BOY. They're pulling back to the ship, sir.

THE CAPT. [*testily*]. Quick. Dip our streamer.

Dip our streamer, boy. Don't you know enough for that? [*The Boy runs aft and dips the streamer.*] Again. Now. Once more. Here. [*He beckons.*] Go below quietly, and see if Lord Pompey's stirring. [*The Boy goes down the hatch. The Captain walks up and down, uneasily looking at the distant ships*] No. No. I don't like it. [*He shakes his head*] I wish we were out of it. [*Re-enter Boy*] Well, lad?

THE BOY. Yes, sir Lord Pompey's up, sir.

THE CAPT. Ah [*Kindly*] You'll be able to tell them, when you get home, that you were shipmates with Pompey the Great.

THE BOY. Yes, sir.

THE CAPT. That's what comes of being a sailor.

THE BOY. Please, sir

THE CAPT. Yes, boy

THE BOY. What is the name of that mountain, sir?

THE CAPT. That? That's Mount Cassius. There's a tale about that mountain. Something about a king. Or some one to die there. I forget. Here. What are they doing aboard those galleys?

THE BOY. They are filling full of soldiers. Soldiers are putting off to them in boats.

THE CAPT. [*striking the bell once*]. Mr. Mate, there!

THE MATE [*below, out of sight*]. Sir.

*Enter Mate.*

THE CAPT. Oh, Mr. Mate. Here, boy. What

are you listening at ? Go forward. And if you want to see your mother again, you pray. Pray that King Ptolemy 'll let you. [*Exit Boy.*]

[*The Captain speaks intently to the Mate.*]  
Look here. We're done. Pompey isn't wanted here. Those eunuchs have put the King against him. See those galleys ? They're getting ready to sink us. If you see one of them getting under way, cut the cable. Don't wait for orders. Cut the cable, and hoist sail.

THE MATE. I'll make all ready, sir.

THE CAPT. It makes your blood boil, though. A week back they'd have crawled all round Pompey for a chance to kiss his footman's boots. Now they're going to drive him out.

THE MATE. Well, sir. You can't expect gratitude from a king, they say. The world's wide. There's other lands besides Egypt. Egypt's got trouble enough, without Pompey. What did he come here for ? That's what I don't see.

THE CAPT. He's had a misfortune. One doesn't know where to turn when one's had a misfortune. And having a wife and that. Very likely he's beside himself, for all he doesn't take on.

THE MATE. He'd ought to have come with his fleet. That would have frightened them. Coming alone like this makes people think he's a beggar. D'you think they'll ram us ?

THE CAPT. I don't trust them.

THE MATE. The hands don't trust them, neither.

THE CAPT. Ah ! the growlers. What do they say ?

THE MATE. They're saying they didn't sign on to be rammed.

THE CAPT. They signed for what I choose.

THE MATE. Yes, sir. They're afraid of the soldiers and that.

THE CAPT. They got sense. If I were Pompey, I'd run for it. A man with a wife like that didn't ought to seek trouble. Well, God send pay-day ! Watch the hands and stand by. That's your job.

THE MATE. I'll make all clear, sir. Bosun, there !

BOSUN [*off*]. Sir ?

THE MATE. Overhaul your gear. Have all ready for getting under way.

BOSUN. Have all ready, sir. I will, sir.

[*Whistle.*

THE MATE [*going*]. There's his steward, sir.

[*Exit.*

THE CAPT. Steward.

PHILIP [*entering*]. Sir.

THE CAPT. Oh ! steward [*PHILIP approaches*] Look here, steward. What's Pompey's object in coming here ?

PHILIP. He's come to see the King.

THE CAPT. Is he come to ask for shelter ?

PHILIP. He's come to raise another army out of all his old soldiers here.

THE CAPT. He won't get any soldiers here. They're all at the wars. The young King's fighting his sister.



PHILIP. That will be patched up. The young King thinks the world of my master. He'll do what Pompey wants.

THE CAPT. He hasn't answered Pompey's letter yet.

PHILIP. No ?

THE CAPT. We've been told not to send a boat ashore.

PHILIP. Well, all I know is, the young King longs to honour Pompey. But for Pompey the old King would have died a poor flute-player in Ephesus. You can see for yourself he's coming. There's his state barge at the jetty. Look. They're out on the roofs. There's music.

*Enter POMPEY.*

THE CAPT. [*unconvinced*]. It may be as you say, steward. Ah.

*[He starts, salutes, and hastily crosses to the starboard, or lee side]*

PHILIP. My lord. Do you know what day it is, my lord ?

POMPEY. What day is it ?

PHILIP. The day of your triumph, my lord. Your Asian triumph. Thirteen years ago.

POMPEY. Is it so long ago ? That was a great day.

PHILIP. Yes, indeed, my lord, I'll never forget that day. We always like to keep it up with a little something among ourselves.

We brought you a few figs, my lord. They're only Cretans. [*He offers figs.*] Just in honour

of the day, my lord. If you would accept of them.

POMPEY [*taking and tasting*]. Thank you, Philip. [*To the Captain.*] This old servant of mine is always bent on spoiling me.

THE CAPT. Yes, my lord. So I see.

PHILIP [*going*] I'm sure I hope to-day will be a great day too, my lord [*Exit PHILIP.*]

POMPEY. It should be, Philip. [*He lays figs on weather fife-rail*] Captain!

THE CAPT. Yes, my lord

POMPEY. Has any one come aboard for me?

THE CAPT. No, my lord.

POMPEY. Thank you

THE CAPT. Beg pardon, my lord.

POMPEY. Well?

THE CAPT. The flagship has ordered us not to send a boat ashore. I thought I ought to report it, my lord.

POMPEY. Thank you, Captain. A fine fleet here.

THE CAPT. [*meaningly*]. They seem to be getting their crews aboard

POMPEY. What speed have those galleys?

THE CAPT. Those there, my lord? They might make seventeen. That's with good rowers. And dead calm. And the ship's new out of dock. In a wind like this, they wouldn't make more'n about eight. They can't work their oars in a sea-way. [*Pause*] Now's the time, my lord, if you think of putting to sea. By and by, may be, they'll be able to stop us.

POMPEY. Thank you, Captain.

THE CAPT. I'll report any boat, my lord.

[*Exit.*]

*Enter CORNELIA.*

CORN. Has the King sent ?

POMPEY. No

CORN. No answer ?

POMPEY. Not yet.

CORN. Can he know we are here ?

POMPEY. Yes. He will come. He will come in person

CORN. Why has he not come already ?

POMPEY. It is early.

CORN. Do you think it is safe to wait ? It is ominous. This silence. And all those ships. And the people crowding on the roofs. What if the King be against us ?

POMPEY. He cannot be. Do not be afraid.

*Enter TIROPHANES*

TIROPHANES. Magnus. They have sent an order. We are not to send a boat ashore. They are plotting something.

POMPEY. If they were plotting, they would ask us to come ashore.

CORN. But why should we not send a boat, if they are friendly ?

POMPEY. The King will be coming in person. Then there was plague in Cyprus. We have not got a clean bill

CORN. But to be ordered.

TIRO. The Admiral should have come.

POMPEY. This is a merchantman. We are not under Roman colours.

CORN. The Captain there is anxious. Look at him.

THEO. Ask him.

POMPEY. It is necessary for the world that I see King Ptolemy.

*[The Captain flings down the halliard coil and goes below.]*

Strange. Is there any Cassius with Ptolemy?

CORN. Lucius Cassius is dead, surely.

THEO. There's Quintus Cassius. But he is in Spain.

CORN. Is there not Cneius Cassius? He was legate in one of Cæsar's legions?

POMPEY. Cneius? I thought he was killed?

THEO. I could find out. Sextus would know.

POMPEY. No. Do not wake him. It is absurd.

CORN. Why do you ask?

POMPEY. When I was in Africa, long ago, an old woman bade me beware of Cassius. I have not thought of it for thirty-four years. An old black hag. Sitting in the sun, there. By the ruins of Carthage. Geminius was riding with me. She hobbled up on a crutch and plucked at my rein. 'Young captain. You beware of Cassius. You that ride so proud, beware of Cassius. The sand is falling.'

CORN. Why should you think of that now?

POMPEY. Because I am going to victory, as I was then. *[The Hands come aft.]*

THE MATE *[following]* Get down off the poop. If you want anything, send a man aft.

1ST HAND. Begging your pardon, your honour.  
We want to speak.

2ND HAND. We mean to speak.

3RD HAND. We want to know why we're  
brought here

4TH HAND. And how long we're to stay here.

2ND HAND. He's been beaten

4TH HAND. He's got no friends. Our lives  
are as good to us as his is

THE MATE. Down off the poop! Down with  
you! Bosun, there! [*Struggling.*]

POMPEY. What is the matter?

[*Struggling ends. Pause.*]

1ST HAND. Begging your pardon, your honour.  
We wanted to see the Captain

POMPEY [*to the Mate*]. What is their grievance?

THE MATE. Some more of their fancies, my  
lord [*To the Hands*]. Get over to leeward.

POMPEY. They seem a good lot. What is it?

THE MATE. Oh, the Captain'll soon settle it,  
my lord [*To the Hands*]. You wait.

[*Exit by hatch to find Captain. Pause.*]

POMPEY *takes a half turn, and then speaks.*

POMPEY [*to Hands*]. Of what do you complain?

1ST HAND. Begging your pardon, your honour.  
We'd rather wait for the Captain

POMPEY. What is wrong, though? Tell me,

1ST HAND. I'd rather not say, my lord.

POMPEY [*takes a half turn, and speaks again*].  
Come. What is the trouble? Is it the food?  
Or the drink?

1ST HAND. Begging your pardon, your honour. We don't like the look of things.

POMPEY. What things ?

1ST HAND. Begging your honour's pardon, the ships there.

2ND HAND. They 're getting ready to sink us.

POMPEY. Why do you think that ?

3RD HAND. You can see the soldiers going aboard them, can't you ?

1ST HAND [to 3RD] Here now. Hie.

3RD HAND [to 1ST] What's wrong ? It's the truth. Isn't it ?

POMPEY. So they are going aboard to sink us ? Why should they sink us ?

3RD HAND. Because you're aboard us. [*He stands out*] You're not wanted here. You're no good to Ptolemy. Cæsar's the man, now, not you. You're no more than what we are.

[*To the Hands*] And we're to be drowned, are we, because his mightiness that was is worth more dead than alive ? He's down. He's no one. He's had fellows die for him for forty years. It's time he learned what it feels like himself

4TH HAND. That's what I say.

3RD HAND. Come on !

2ND HAND. Man the halliards

3RD HAND. We'll carry you to Cæsar. And sell you.

POMPEY. Stand back !

You say that the soldiers are coming to sink us ?

There are five thousand troops there, and fifty ships.

Are they all coming to sink us ?

It seems a large force to sink one ship, manned by such a company.

3RD HAND. Here Look here !

1ST HAND { [[to 3RD] You 'll get us hanged.

2ND HAND { Give him sheet

4TH HAND { How about us ? That 's what I  
say

POMPEY If I am still so terrible, I must save you. I will go to the flagship yonder. Man your boat.

3RD HAND You will go to the flagship ?

1ST HAND [*alarmed*]. Look at her There.

4TH HAND Look.

2ND HAND. Look at her. She 's got her oars out.

1ST HAND She 's coming. We 're gone up.

3RD HAND Then he 'll go first

1ST HAND [*holding him*] No, you don't.

*Enter Captam*

THE CAPT She 's coming, my lord Shall I cut ? We might do it, even now.

POMPEY She is not coming. And if she were, what is death ?

THE CAPT Hard times for the widow, my lord

POMPEY [*to the men*] Leave the ropes.

Do you think the soul can be quenched with water ? Or cut with swords ? Or burned ?

3RD HAND. I know my body can, my lord.

POMPEY. You do well to fear death. Go to your place.

[*Musingly.*] If death can crush what comprehends heaven? Why! We are in a bad way, Captain.

[*The Hands file off, quietly* POMPEY *looks down on the main deck. The Captain stands apart anxiously watching the flagship.* CORNELIA and THEOPHANES *eye each other.*

CORN. Is the flagship coming?

THEO. She is ready to come.

CORN. To sink us?

THEO. She could sink us.

CORN. I cannot bear this.

[POMPEY *turning, walks towards them.*

THEO. We ought to have gone to our fleet. We 're helpless like this.

CORN. Magnus. This isn't what we planned.

POMPEY. Let me reassure you. Egypt is friendly to me.

I saved her independence. I made the elder Ptolemy King. The young King is my ward, bound to me by intimate ties. Those troops are veterans of my Asian Army.

THEO. The young King's at his wits' end with civil war. How can he begin a war with Cæsar?

CORN. [*bitterly*]. And we are suppliants to him. We Romans. To whom they should strike their flags. [*After a pause, quickly.*] See if they refuse to salute us.

THEO. We should know what to expect then.



CORN. Oh, let us be certain. Hoist your colours

POMPEY It is not time yet. I will hoist them when the watch ends.

THE CAPT. One bell, my lord

POMPEY The watch is nearly out ?

THE CAPT. Nearly, my lord. Will you hoist any colours, my lord ?

POMPEY. My consular colours.

THE CAPT. I'm only a merchantman, my lord. If they should refuse to salute, my lord ?

POMPEY You will go alongside the flagship there, and order her to salute

THE CAPT [*going*] I am all ready to get under way, my lord Bosun, there ! Stand by. Mr. Mate Boy, there !

[*He goes to the break of the poop and looks down on main deck.*]

Are your colours bent on, Centurion ?

CENTURION [*off*] Tell him, yes

BOY [*off*] All ready to hoist, sir

THE CAPT [*coming to POMPEY*]. All ready, my lord. Will you make eight bells, my lord ?

POMPEY When it is time

[*He paces leisurely.*]

Theophanes Have you your tables ?

THEO Yes

POMPEY. I shall want you to take notes.

[*To CORNELIA*] What was that passage about the soul ? We were reading it that day at Alba, when the women brought you their first-fruits ? Our first year. We were in the

garden. You were reading to me. There was a verse about the soul

CORN. The upright soul is safe ?

POMPEY. Yes. That was the verse. I have always loved Alba. I was there as a child. We were happy there, that year.

CORN. Very happy. And that day, the doves came, picking the spilled grain. And at night there was a moon.

POMPEY. All the quiet valley. And the owls were calling. Those little grey owls. Make eight bells, Captain.

*[The Captain makes it. The Bosun pipes the colours up]*

THE CAPT. Not so fast there, boy

*[Eight bells is echoed over the harbour from ship to ship. POMPEY and THEOPHANES raise their right hands. Perhaps CORNELIA ought to reel]*

THEO. The flagship is hoisting her ensign.

*[Bugles off.]*

CORN. Will she salute ? Will she salute ?  
There

THEO. There. She dips it

CORN. They all salute.

THEO. Then we are safe

POMPEY. That is settled, then. I am to be received

Now to work.

Captain, there.

THE CAPT. I beg pardon, my lord, but there is a boat coming towards us.

POMPEY. What do you make of her ?

THE CAPT. They pull very badly, my lord.  
They pull like soldiers.

POMPEY. They are soldiers I see the gleam  
of armour.

THEO. Seven soldiers

THE CAPT. Am I to let them alongside, my  
lord ?

POMPEY. Wait

CORN. What can they be coming for ?

POMPEY. Can the King have sent her ?

THEO. Sent a fishing boat like that, Cneius,  
to take you ashore ?

CORN. You cannot go in that boat.

THEO. Magnus There is some treachery.

CORN. Cneius It is a dreadful risk, to  
stay.

POMPEY. It is necessary. You would rather  
I ran the risk than let the world become—what  
it will become.

CORN. Much rather.

POMPEY. You will understand, then

THE CAPT. They are hauling, my lord. Would  
the lady go below a little ? They might fling a  
dart on board.

CORN. The air is fresher here.

SEPTIMIUS [off] Hail! Pompey, Imperator.

THE CAPT. We could still run for it, my lord.

POMPEY. We must not show that we mistrust  
them

SEPT [off] Hail, Pompey, Imperator !

POMPEY. Have your men ready to salute

SEPT [off] In bow

CORN. Cneius. Cneius.

POMPEY. There is no danger Have you the little book with my speech to Ptolemy ?

CORN. Here it is

SEPT. [off]. Toss your starboard oars. Way enough

POMPEY. Company there Salute.

THE CAPT The call, there

*Enter SEPTIMIUS, a Roman military tribune, with  
ACHILLAS EGYPTIAN, both in military dress.  
The Bosun pipes the side for each of them*

POMPEY [advancing] You come from King Ptolemy ? [SEPTIMIUS salutes, ACHILLAS bows.

ACHILLAS From King Ptolemy. He send you royal greeting.

POMPEY He wishes to see me ?

ACHIL. He wish to see you To be your friend.

POMPEY Shall I bring the ship alongside the quay there ?

ACHIL There is much mud and sandbanks There would be no water for this galley. You have to take a boat

POMPEY [glancing at ships] Your fleet is getting under way here ?

ACHIL [shrugging his shoulders]. Ah ? Will you come into my boat ?

POMPEY She is not a very handsome boat.

ACHIL No ? It is bad weather sometimes

POMPEY [to SEPTIMIUS] I think I should know you, my friend You and I have served together ? [SEPTIMIUS nods, but does not answer.

Where was it ? I know your face

[ No answer

A long time ago. Eighteen years ago. In the war against the pirates? [*Pause*] Was it not?

[*No answer.*]

You commanded a company in my guard. [*Pause*] You did something? You burnt a ship one night? You paddled out alone and set fire to her? I remember you. I gave you a sword. You are wearing it now.

SEPT [*turning to the boat, muttering to himself*].  
I'm as good a man as you are.

ACHIL You come in my little boat. I take you to the King. The King is your friend. Lovely lady, the King want to see him.

CORN Yes.

POMPEY I will follow you. Go down into the boat.

[*ACHILLAS, boxing, goes to gangway, where he stands, looking aft*]

POMPEY Now.

THEO Magnus. You mustn't go.

CORN Cicius. Cicius. What do they mean?

THEO You mustn't go, Magnus.

POMPEY My beloved! You must stay here. You must not come.

CORN My darling! What are they going to do?

POMPEY What God will.

Theophanes. If this is the end, I wish it to be the end. Those arrangements of the fleet. Caned them. You understand. Go to Cato. Tell Cato to submit to Caesar. War will only mean more bloodshed. He cannot stand against Caesar. I could have

Scipio's daughter. Make your father submit.

to Cæsar. Keep my sons out of it. Tell them. End the war. Life is very grand, but there is something behind it. Something which strikes a mean. I had my hand on it. Come. Courage. These are Egyptians. *[To CORNELIA.]*

Captain You must sail Stand by

What else is there? Asia. Theophanes Asia must submit. Send to the Kings The world must make what terms it can. This is all in the event If this is the end. You understand? If not, you know my orders

Philip. Scythes Cotta Godown into the boat

PHILIP. My lord I've served you a long time, my lord.

POMPEY. What is it, Philip?

*[COTTA and SCYTHES go.]*

PHILIP. My lord My old, beloved lord

POMPEY Why, Philip We are the only ones left We are two old Sulla's men Have you my cloak in the boat?

PHILIP. Forty years, my lord.

POMPEY The broidered one *[To CORNELIA]*

Your gift. Come Carry it down, man.

PHILIP. I wish it was to begin all over again

*[Exit]*

ACHIL. Will you come into the boat? The King is waiting

CORN. Cneius My husband My husband

POMPEY God only lends us

If the King keep faith. We shall have time Time for what we must imagine. If not. We know our love. The gods treasure you

*[He goes towards gangway]*

Remember, Captain.

THEOPHANES. If I fail, you must warn Lentulus.

[*He goes to gangway. The Bosun starts to pipe the side. POMPEY turns to the Boy*  
*Bosun stops his pipe POMPEY takes figs*  
*from fife-rail and gives them to the Boy.*

Can you eat figs ? [The Boy mumbles

What is your name ?

[The Boy bursts into tears

ACHIL [at gangway] Give me your hand. I  
 take your hand down

POMPEY [*pausing in the gangway and looking*  
*back. Sadly To THEOPHANES*]

'A brave man enters court of his free will

Even though the judge may bind him when  
 he enters'

[*He goes down The Bosun pipes the side*

SEPT [coldly] Back your port oars Shove  
 off Give way together.

THILCAPT [*softly to Mate*] Go on there. Man  
 your halliards

THE MATE Take the turns off Stretch it  
 along Softly now Stand by

[*The Scaunch coming behind CORNELIA, man*  
*the halliards The Chantymen stands on*  
*the bits All look after the boat*

THE CHANTY There's a lot of troops ashore

THE MATE S's't

CORN They are not talking to him

THEO He is reading his speech. [*Pause*]

He organises everything Caesar improvises.

CORN. There they go out of the sun.

THEO. The hull casts a long shadow

CORN. What is the name of the hill ?

THE CAPT. Mount Cassius, lady.

THEO. [*quickly*] They are coming with banners. Look.

CORN. He is safe.

THEO. There comes the King. Hark ! Trumpets. They're saluting. He is standing up to land.

CORN. Ah ! Swords. He is stabbed.

THEO. Ah ! you gods. You gods !

CORN. Oh ! He is killed ! He is killed ! He is killed !

[*She collapses.*]

THEO [*covering his eyes*] The devils ! The devils !

THE MATE. They stabbed him in the back.

ANTISIA. It's ebb tide now, my beauty.

THE CAPT. [*yelling*] Cut the cable

[*Chopping forward*]

A VOICE. All gone, the cable.

THE MATE. Let fall.

A VOICE. All gone

THE MATE. Sheet home. Hoist away.

THE MEN. Ho

[*They haul.*]

THE CHANTY. Away ho !

[*The Men haul.*]

[*He intones in a clear loud voice. The Seamen sing the chorus, hauling.*]

[*This song is sung like an ordinary halliard chanty. The chorus is to the tune of the old chanty of 'Hanging Johnny.' The solo will be intoned clearly, without tune. It goes to fast time, the chorus starting almost before the soloist ends his line. The Men must haul twice, in the proper manner, in each chorus.*]



THE CHANTY.

Kneel to the beautiful women who bear us  
this strange brave fruit

THE MEN.      Away, i-oh.

THE CHANTY.

Man with his soul so noble : man half god  
and half brute.

THE MEN.      So away, i-oh.

THE CHANTY.

Women bear him in pain that he may bring  
them tears.

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY.

He is a king on earth, he rules for a term of  
years

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY.

And the conqueror's prize is dust and lost  
endeavour.

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY

And the beaten man becomes a story for  
ever.

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY.

For the gods employ strange means to bring  
their will to be.

CHORUS.

THE CHANTY.

We are in the wise gods' hands and more we  
cannot see.

CHORUS      So away, i-oh.

A VOICE    High enough.

THE MATE. Lie to. [*The Seamen lay to the fall.*] Make fast.

Coil up.

A VOICE. All clear to seaward.

THE CAPT. Pipe down.

[*The Bosun pipes the belay.*

*Curtain.*

## NOTES

## ON THE APPEARANCE OF POMPEY

Portraits exist of Cneius Pompeius Magnus. The most important of these is a marble bust at Copenhagen. Several likenesses are to be found on the gold and silver coins struck by his son, Sextus, in Spain. Plutarch says of him that, 'being come to man's state, there appeared in his gesture and behaviour a grave and princely majesty. His hair also stood a little upright, and the cast and soft moving of his eyes had a certain resemblance (as they said) of the statues and images of Alexander the Great. This resemblance may still be traced.

At the time of his murder he was fifty-eight years old, a powerful, very active man, in the prime of life. His bust, evidently done towards the end of his life, shows that his hair, which was thick, coarse, and worn rather long, still tended to stand a little upright. The head is of great breadth at the eyes. The brow is low and lined with three deep lines of wrinkles going right across it in irregular M shape. The eyebrows are well marked, the supra-orbital ridge is heavy. The nose is tall and strong, with the broad base which is so good an index of intellectual power. The septum is of great breadth. The mouth is of that kindly tightness which one sees in the portraits of some of our Admirals. Below the mouth is a deep horizontal dent. The chin is not cloven. The face is lined a good deal. A deep straight wrinkle runs from each side of the nose to the puckered angles of the mouth. The eyes are crows-footed. There are no indications as to the colour of the hair and eyes. The shape of the head suggests the brown or fair type of man. At the time of his death he was perhaps grizzled.

No known portrait exists of any of the other characters

Metellus came of a family once distinguished for pointed noses, Domitius of a family once famed for red hair. Cornelia was famous for a grave and gentle beauty. She was young, though already a widow, when Pompey married her, a few months before the civil trouble began.

#### ON THE FATE OF THE PERSONS IN THIS TRAGEDY

*Phlip* After religiously burning his master's body on the seashore, disappears from history.

*Metellus Scipio.* Fled from Pharsalia to Africa, where he carried on the war until 46 B.C. when he was defeated by Cæsar at Thapsus. Flying from Africa by sea, in bad weather, he was forced to put into the port of Hippo, where one of Cæsar's fleets lay at anchor. A battle followed. He is said to have drowned himself shortly before his ship was sunk.

*Cn. Pompeius Theophanes* Returned to Italy, and was pardoned by Cæsar. He attained great fame as a writer. After his death the Lesbians paid him divine honours. His son held office under Augustus.

*Marcus Cato* After Pharsalia, joined Scipio in Africa, and held command under him. He killed himself in Utica, shortly after the battle of Thapsus, so that he might not live to see the final extinction of liberty. His son was killed at Philippi, 'valiantly fighting against Augustus,' four years later.

*Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus* Was killed (some say by Mark Antony) either in the battle, or in the route, of Pharsalia, at which he commanded the great brigade of horse, on the left of Pompey's army.

*Marcus Atilius Glabrio* Continued in Cæsar's service, and rose to be governor of Achaia.

*Lucius Lucceius* Returned to Rome, and received Cæsar's pardon. He was praised by Cicero for the excellence of his historical writings.

*Lucius Afranius* After Pharsalia, joined Scipio in Africa and held command under him till the battle of Thapsus. While riding through Mauretania, on his way to Spain, after that disaster, he was ambushed and taken by Cæsar's lieutenant, P. Sittius. A few days later, the troops of Sittius killed him in a camp riot.

*Lentulus Spinther* After Pharsalia, fled to Rhodes, where

he was refused permission to land. He set sail again 'much against his will,' and either 'perished ingloriously' or disappeared from history.

*Achillas Egyptian* Was killed by Arsinoe (Ptolemy's sister) and the eunuch Ganymed in the year after Pompey's murder.

#### ON THE HOUSE OF POMPEY, AFTER THE MURDER

*Cornelia* After seeing her husband killed, fled to Cyrene, and thence to Rome, where, in time, Pompey's ashes were brought to her. She is said to have buried them 'in a town of hers by the city of Alba,' near Rome.

*C'n Pompeius Magnus*, the Triumvir's eldest son, by his third wife, Mucia, held Corcyra for a time, showing courage and bold strategic ideas. On hearing of his father's death, he went to Spain, where he raised a great army. He was defeated at the bloody battle of Munda, in the year 45. Soon after the battle he was betrayed, taken and killed. His head was carried to Seville and exposed there to the public gaze.

*Sextus Pompeius Magnus* The younger son (also by Mucia) continued the war in Africa, with Cato's party, till after the battle of Thapsus. He then joined his brother in Spain. After Cæsar's murder, he was proscribed by Octavian, and took the seas, with a fleet, burning, sinking and intercepting commerce, till Octavian came to terms. On the recommencement of war between them, his fleet was beaten by Octavian's fleet under Agrippa. After trying vainly to beat up a force in Asia, he was taken and put to death at Miletus (probably by the order of Mark Antony) in the year 35. He left a daughter whose fate is uncertain. She was with him in Asia in 36.

*Pompeia* The daughter (also by Mucia) married Faustus, the son of Sulla, who was killed with Afranius in the mutiny of the troops of P. Sittius, in Africa in 46. She afterwards married L. Cornelius Cinna. It is not known when she died, but it is certain that she predeceased her brother Sextus. She had a son by Cornelius Cinna, who came to be Consul in A.D. 5. What became of her children by Faustus is not known.

And all their passionate hearts are dust,  
And dust the great idea that burned  
In various flames of love and lust  
'Till the world's brain was turned

God, moving darkly in men's brains,  
Using their passions as His tool,  
Brings freedom with a tyrant's chains  
And wisdom with the fool

Blindly and bloodily we drift,  
Our interests clog our hearts with dreams  
God make my brooding mind a rift  
Through which a meaning gleams

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